

was imposed on the investigation. As part of this multi-faceted investigation, in the summer and early fall of 1997 Committee staff contacted Interior Department officials regarding the decision on the Hudson casino application, requested that DOI produce documents relating to that matter, and took several depositions of witnesses regarding the Hudson matter.

In early October, the Committee requested through Melanie Beller, Director of the DOI Congressional and Legislative Affairs Office, that the Secretary submit to an informal private interview. Beller conferred with Babbitt and others at Interior – Ann Shields, John Leshy, Director of Communications Michael Gauldin and perhaps Heather Sibbison – who were uncomfortable with the request because they believed selected portions of Eckstein’s deposition had already been leaked to the media, leading to news allegations that Babbitt had implied to Eckstein that campaign contributions influenced the Hudson decision. They reportedly feared the Committee would selectively leak information from an interview with the Secretary in a further attempt to embarrass him or the Department. On Oct. 8, Beller informed a Committee staff member of the Secretary’s decision that he would be willing to testify in an open forum, but would not sit for a private interview. He requested that the Secretary’s refusal be put in writing. A two-page letter to Sen. Thompson was prepared.

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<sup>625</sup>(...continued)

effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government; (C) evaluating the efforts of laws enacted to reorganize the legislative and executive branches of the Government; and (D) studying the intergovernmental relationships between the United States and the States and municipalities, and between the United States and international organizations of which the United States is a member.